

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK**

January 17, 2013

**5:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Mayor Donald Kasprzak, Councilors Tim Carpenter (W1), Mark Tiffer (W2), George Rabideau (W3), Jim Calnon (W4), Chris Case (W5), Chris Jackson (W6)

**Absent:** None

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**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the regular meeting of the Common Council held on January 10, 2013 are approved and placed on file among the public records of the City Clerk's Office.

By Councilor Carpenter; Seconded by Councilor Tiffer

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**2. PAYROLLS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS:**

**RESOLVED:** That the payrolls of the various Departments of the City of Plattsburgh for the week ending January 16, 2013 in the amount of \$246,842.66 are authorized and allowed and the Mayor and the City Clerk are hereby empowered and directed to sign warrants drawn on the City Chamberlain for the payment thereof.

By Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Calnon

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**3. REPORTS OF CITY OFFICES & COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Report of Fire and Ambulance Responses for the week of January 10 –January 16, 2013
- Report from the Building Inspector's Office from December 28, 2012 – January 10, 2013
- Statement from the City Clerk's Office of all monies received during the month of December 2012 in the total amount of \$58,957.53

**RESOLVED:** That the reports as listed are hereby ordered, received and placed on file among the public records of the City Clerk's Office.

By Councilor Rabideau; Seconded by Councilor Case

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**4. CORRESPONDENCE & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS: None**

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**5. AUDIT OF CLAIMS:**

**RESOLVED:** That the bills Audited by the Common Council in the amount of \$ 941,927.55 are authorized and allowed and the Mayor and City Clerk (where required) are hereby authorized and directed to sign warrants drawn on the City Chamberlain for the payment thereof.

By Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Carpenter  
Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson  
(All voted in the affirmative)

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**6. PERSONS ADDRESSING COUNCIL:**

**Laverne Hicks** 9 Alex Way in January 7<sup>th</sup> Press Republican article new meeting schedule pay reductions for Mayor/Councilors? Changes.

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**7. OTHER ITEMS:**

**A. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves MLD to advertise for sealed bids for PMLD Bid No. 2013-1-2 "46 KV Circuit Breakers for St. Lawrence 1 and 3, Phase 2." Bid Opening date: February 20, 2013 at 1:00 pm.

By Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Carpenter  
Discussion: None  
Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson  
(All voted in the affirmative)  
**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted  
Follow up Action: None

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**B. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves MLD to advertise for sealed bids for PMLD Bid No. 2013-1-3 "St. Lawrence 1 Substation-Relay and Control Panel 7." Bid Opening date: February 20, 2013 at 1:00 pm.

By Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Carpenter  
Discussion: None  
Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson  
(All voted in the affirmative)  
**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted  
Follow up Action: None

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**C. RESOLVED:** City of Plattsburgh Housing Revolving Loan Fund loan no. 47 made on 1/10/2006 to Po Sun Woo & Kam Mui Woo for housing repairs on property at 62-64 Margaret Street, is authorized to be amended on the following terms:



1. The borrower shall pay down the outstanding principal balance of the loan by a sum equal to 10% of the loan balance.
2. The interest rate shall be fixed at 2.44% and the loan, as amended, shall be amortized over a ten year term.

By Councilor Case; Seconded by Councilor Tiffer

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**D. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the ROTA Gallery is herewith authorized, pending receipt of proof of proper insurance coverage in accordance with City policy, to hold the "Really Really Free Market" event in Trinity Park on Saturday, June 15, 2013 between the hours of 9:30am and 11:00pm

By Councilor Calnon; Seconded by Councilor Jackson

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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#### **E. APPOINTMENT:**

THE MAYOR HANDS DOWN THE REAPPOINTMENT OF JIM ABDALLAH TO THE PLANNING BOARD FOR A SEVEN YEAR TERM EXPIRING 1/13/2020

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

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#### **8. TRAVEL REQUEST:**

**A. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request from the Chief of Police: that three police officers be approved for travel to New York City from Jan 22 to 24, 2013 to attend a "Meeting with the NYC District Attorney and the NYC Drug Task Force Investigations unit" for a cost not to exceed \$1,824.00 to be paid from the Asset Forfeiture fund.

By Councilor Calnon; Seconded by Councilor Jackson

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**B. Motion to waive rule 4 for initial consideration** “Request from Assistant Fire Chief Randal Stone for eight Firefighters in need of Continuing Medical Education credits to attend the Special Needs Conference in Keeseville, NY on 26 January 2013 with funding from the Fire Department’s training budget. \$160

By Councilor Calnon; Seconded by Councilor Case

**RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves eight Firefighters in need of Continuing Medical Education credits to attend the Special Needs Conference in Keeseville, NY on 26 January 2013 with funding from the Fire Department’s training budget. \$160

By Councilor Calnon; Seconded by Councilor Case

Discussion: **Councilor Tiffer** questioned \$160.

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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## 9. **RESOLUTIONS FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION:**

1. Request from Joe McMahon Building Inspector for himself, Kyle Burdo and Claude Bouchard permission to attend the “Northern Adirondack Code Enforcement Officials Education Conference from March 4 – 7, 2013 in Lake Placid, NY for a cost not to exceed \$1,038 and this conference provides mandatory training hours to retain Code Enforcement Certification.
2. Request from Assistant Fire Chief Randal Stone for eight Firefighters in need of Continuing Medical Education credits to attend the Special Needs Conference in Keeseville, NY on 26 January 2013 with funding from the Fire Department’s training budget. \$160 (**Move to agenda under “Travel Request” Letter B**)
3. In accordance with the request therefore, the Manager of the Municipal Lighting Department be permitted to proceed with the write-off of unpaid final bills for the period October 1 to October 31, 2011 in the approximate amount of \$1,927.71.

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## 10. **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Councilor Rabideau** thanked Councilor Calnon and City Chamberlain Richard Marks for Budget sessions. Mode for meetings is the same as County/Town.

**Councilor Calnon** said Committee meetings begin next week the first is “Records” for next week.

**Councilor Tiffer** clarifies that \$10,000 work not limited to meetings open door policy.

**Councilor Jackson** read and submitted the attached statement regarding Fire Department.

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Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Tiffer  
Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Tiffer, Rabideau, Calnon, Case, Jackson  
(All voted in the affirmative)

**MEETING ADJOURNED: 5:52pm**



I would like to talk about the Fire Department, but before I begin I would like to provide some perspective and some history.

This is the beginning of my sixth year on the Council. I am proud of the work we have accomplished in the past 5 years. This Mayor, Council and City Management Team have weathered many tough situations. Including the PETNY Trust Workers Compensation fiasco, the reduction of over \$750,000 dollars per year from Saranac Power Partners funds, continued double digit increases in New York State Retirement system payments and many other smaller crises'.

Over the last five years I have always been optimistic about the future of the City because I always felt there were budget items that the Mayor, Council and Managers could look at, make improvements too, change the way things are done or cut cost from. We have turned over every rock we could think of to find savings or efficiencies. We have changed the way the City does business: from on line bill

paying, to competitively bidding insurance, to requesting and receiving a bond rating increase. All these changes will save the City money for years to come.

In the grand scheme of things, the last five years have brought extreme stability and a high degree of certainty to the residents of the City of Plattsburgh and we have been able to maintain a very stable tax rate while continuing to providing the services our residents expect.

During one of our last budget sessions this past December, I stated that the residents of the City of Plattsburgh have come to expect a certain quality of life, at an affordable price and I firmly believe that the hard work done by the Mayor, Council and Managers over the last five years has made that possible. Unfortunately, I am not as confident about the future

From 2008-2011, through the efficiencies mentioned above, and the hard work by the Mayor, Councilors and our Managers, we built a substantial General fund balance that was our safety net. At the end of 2011 our fund balance was \$5.6 million dollars. In 2012 that was



reduced by \$1.6 million in order to balance our budget and in 2013 we needed to appropriate another \$2.3 so that we do not exceed the tax cap. Our projected fund balance at the end of 2013 is \$1.7 million. This is a \$3.9 million dollar reduction, which is 70%, in just two years. 2014 is also looking grim.

I have tried to lay out where we have been now I would like to talk about where we need to go. What I am about to say is not meant to threaten or scare anyone, but rather the facts as I see them.

There are structural changes that need to be made on how the city, and specifically how the fire department, operates, in order to maintain that “quality of life” that residents have come to expect. In the future, there can be no department that benefits at the expense of another department. What it comes down to is this: In order for future Administrations to have the ability to make fair and equitable decisions regarding the General fund, all departments must be treated equally. **It is the only way to**



**spread the mutual shared sacrifice that the future is going to demand.**

The Fire Union contract contains a minimum manning clause that requires the city to maintain a level of 36 paid firefighters. Since the manning clause protects the fire department from layoffs under a certain level, the rest of the employees of the city of Plattsburgh that are paid out the general fund are going to bear the burden of any future cuts.

I am in no way disparaging the job that fire department members do for the city and praise them for the job they do.

Councilor Calnon once said, “The manning clause makes it simple, it’s either 36 firefighters or 0”. I know he was being felicitous at the time and I know that he also understands the necessity of a paid fire department, but the questions are, in what form and at what cost?

I have done some initial research on Hybrid fire departments in small cities in New York State and provided the resulting information to my fellow Councilors and the Mayor. I have

provided them with 3 examples and the contact information for the people I spoke with.

A Hybrid fire department is made up of both paid and volunteer members. Hybrid Fire Departments are working in other small cities in New York State, why not here in Plattsburgh.

I want to remind everyone about my first year in office. The battle was whether or not to make drastic cuts to the MLD line staff. I fought for a more reasonable solution that included a modest rate increase and less cuts to staff. It worked then, and it's still working today. I have never believed that cutting expenses or services is the only way reach an outcome that benefits everyone. There has to be give and take in every situation.

With the newly formed committee structure we adapted for this year, I would like to recommend that the Public Safety Committee take up this issue as an agenda item at its first meeting.